



*Quadea Bishop, a fifth grader at Halls Cross Roads Elementary School, participates in a clarinet lesson, given by the 389 Army Band's (AMC's Own) Sgt. Apollo Melo.*

## Band members mentor music students

*Story and photos by  
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The 389th Army Band (AMC's Own) has teamed up with Halls Cross Roads Elementary School to mentor the instrumental music students there.

Band director Mark Warfield is very pleased with the program.

"It's quite an opportunity for the kids," he said.

Twice a week, a member of the band who volunteered for the program, heads over to the school to give the students private lessons. Many of the children are from underprivileged homes, with parents who cannot afford individual lessons.

The band members also play along with the student musicians during their con-

certs, giving a separate performance afterwards. During the spring concert on May 10, the entire band will play several songs after the student band is finished.

Soldiers aid the children in working on their basic materials, learning fingerings and tunes that will help them in their band performances. Most of the students are second year players, though a few are beginners.

Offering Warfield comments on the students' progress, missteps and practice habits, the mentors are very helpful for the band director.

"They've given me a lot of tips and info that I've missed," he said. "It's really nice to have someone else work with the kids."

Sgt. Apollo Melo, a clarinet player with the band, has been mentoring to the student clarinetists since the program began about a year ago.

He plans on teaching when his tour is over, though history is his fancy, not music.

"I might be a slightly tougher teacher than they're used to," he said. "My favorite word is 'again.'"

Melo feels that children should not be patronized for their age. Some have talent and take off, he said, while others without that natural talent work hard for it. They have to be praised and encouraged, but told when they obviously haven't practiced.

"Children want to learn," he added. "We must maintain that will."

Support from the school's administration and teachers has helped the program take off, said Warfield. Because the students have to be pulled out of class time to attend lessons, the school's staff has to be flexible and see the importance of music education.

"We've built quite a reputation that Halls Cross Roads means business with music," Warfield said.



*Band director Mark Warfield plays along with fourth grade french horn students from left, Melanie Lilly, Hakeem Wilson and John Cockrell.*